THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Goodwill Mission to Afghanistan

*534. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal before Government to send a goodwill mission to Afghanistan to establish people to people contact to rebuild old relations and confidence;

(b) if so, by when; and

(c) whether the mission would be official or unofficial?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) As part of commitment to strengthen our multifaceted ties with the people and government of Afghanistan, Government of India has maintained active interaction with the Interim Administration of Afghanistan. Several Ministers in the Afghan Interim Administration have visited India. H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai himself visited India on 26-27 February 2002. Government has also provided extensive humanitarian and other assistance to the Interim Administration of Afghanistan.

Some Indian non-governmental organizations have also expressed keenness to contribute to the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan. Government would encourage all efforts which strengthen people to people relationship, as also contribute to economic and social rehabilitation.

GDP Growth Rate

*535. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it a fact that GDP growth during the Ninth Five Year Plan period (1997—2002) would be average 5.4 per cent as compared to 6.7 per cent during Eighth Five Year Plan,

5.9 per cent during Seventh Five Year Plan or even 5.6 per cent during Sixth Five Year Plan;

(b) the reasons for declining trend in GDP rate during the successive Plans and what is the projected GDP growth during the Tenth Five Year Period; and

(c) what measures are proposed to be adopted so that the targeted GDP rate is achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The GDP growth rates increased from the Sixth Plan to the Eighth Plan. In the Ninth Plan, however, there was a decline. The reasons for low growth in the Ninth Plan are mainly emanating from poor growth in agriculture sector and shortfall in public investment and savings. As per the Approach Paper to the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002—07), which was approved by the National Development Council in September 2001, an average GDP growth target of 8 per cent per annum is proposed for the Tenth Five Year Plan.

(c) The Tenth Plan is under formulation.

Installation of Telephones in Mainpuri

t*536. SHRI R. N. ARYA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact - that the officials of the Mainpuri Telecom circle have provided incorrect facts with regard to target fixed for providing telephones during the last two years and the bills are being sent there even before installation of telephones;

(b) the number of telephones working in Mainpuri and nearby towns upto March, 2002 along with the number of working telephones shown as on paper during the last two years;

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.